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# Naval Postgraduate School Welcomes VADM Ret David Lewis as New Chair of Acquisition

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Monterey, California, Naval Postgraduate School

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# Naval Postgraduate School Welcomes VADM (Ret.) David Lewis as New Chair of Acquisition - Acquisition Research Program

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 [nps.edu/web/acqnresearch/blog/-/blogs/lewis](https://nps.edu/web/acqnresearch/blog/-/blogs/lewis)

## Naval Postgraduate School Welcomes VADM (Ret.) David Lewis as New Chair of Acquisition

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[Michelle V Johnson](#)

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On October 13, 2020, Vice Admiral David H. Lewis, USN (Ret.) took the helm as the Naval Postgraduate School Chair of Acquisition. As chair, he will lead the Acquisition Research Program (ARP) in the Graduate School of Defense Management and connect NPS with leaders and policymakers in the acquisition community.

Lewis graduated from NPS in 1988 with a Master of Science in Computer Science, and we're pleased to welcome him back to campus in this leadership role. Lewis is replacing the founding Chair of Acquisition, Rear Admiral, USN (Ret.) Jim Greene, who retired this June.

Most recently, Lewis served as Director of the Defense Contract Management Agency, managing over \$7 trillion in defense contracts. In this role, he oversaw the agency's efforts to ensure that supplies and services contracted for by the Department of Defense are delivered on time and in line with contract performance requirements.

During his career at sea, Lewis served as a communications officer, fire control and missile battery officer, and combat systems officer aboard destroyers and guided-missile cruisers.

Upon selection to flag rank in 2009, Lewis served as Vice Commander, Naval Sea Systems Command and then served four years as Program Executive Officer, Ships, where he directed the delivery of 18 ships and procurement of another 51 ships. From 2014-2017 he served as Commander, Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command where he led a global workforce of 10,300 civilian and military personnel who design, develop and deploy advanced communications and information capabilities.

Lewis's extensive experience in shipbuilding has given him a unique understanding of the full acquisition lifecycle. He has delivered ships as a program manager and program executive officer, then later sustained and modernized them as a fleet engineer and

systems commander. He will bring valuable perspective to NPS students and faculty, as well as the broader acquisition innovation community working to get superior capabilities into the hands of our warfighters.

Lewis's expertise in product delivery will amplify ARP's ability to execute its mission of delivering the real-time information and analytical capabilities needed by today's acquisition professionals and policymakers. Adding VADM Lewis to the team also demonstrates NPS's continued commitment to providing world-class defense-focused education and research.

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We asked Admiral Lewis to share a few thoughts with us during his first week on the job. His answers are below.

**Q: How did your time as an NPS student prepare you for your naval career?**

A: I took two courses in material science, and I've used that knowledge more than anything else. I learned through my experiences managing programs and overseeing contracts that acquisition is not independent from the technical side – the two are closely integrated. Leaders need to be able to identify and solve technical problems to keep programs on track, not just manage a process.

**Q: Why did you choose this job as the next step in your career?**

A: I've been both a customer and sponsor for the program in the past. I value the work that we do, which motivated my desire to join the team. There are a lot of exciting things going on in DoD acquisition these days, and I see ARP as a nexus of innovative thought and practical experience; bringing academia, practitioners, and operational personnel together to think through the hard, hard problems we face.

**Q: In your view, what makes ARP valuable for the defense acquisition community?**

A: Our obvious "product" is the research and thesis work we sponsor, but I also see another ARP "product": the students and researchers we sponsor. Their work with us educates them on the issues, gives them intellectual tools to address them, and teaches them analytic methodologies to assess solutions.

**Q: How does an education supported by the Acquisition Research Program prepare students to succeed in their future operational assignments?**

A: They will carry their learned knowledge forward into their future assignments, military or civilian, and it will enhance their abilities as leaders and researchers to address tomorrow's even more challenging problems. We are helping to solve today's acquisition problems while we build tomorrow's acquisition leaders.